



NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES

June 30, 2000

Dr. George M. Dennison
President
University of Montana - Missoula
Missoula, MT 59812

Dear President ^{George} Dennison:

On behalf of the Commission on Colleges, I am pleased to report that the accreditation of the University of Montana - Missoula has been reaffirmed on the basis of the recent comprehensive self-study and full-scale evaluation. Congratulations on receiving this continued recognition.

The policy of the Commission is not to grant accreditation for a definite number of years. Instead, accreditation must be reaffirmed periodically. Each institution is to conduct a self-study and be visited by a full evaluation committee at least once every ten years and, during the fifth year, the institution is to submit an interim report and be visited by one or more Commission representatives. In the case of the University of Montana - Missoula, the Commission requested that the institution prepare a progress report in fall 2001 which is to address General Recommendation 1 of the spring 2000 Evaluation Committee Report, page 65. In addition, the Commission requested that the University prepare a focused interim report and host a visit by a Commission representative in fall 2002. The report and evaluation are to again address General Recommendation 1 and General Recommendations 3 and 5 of the aforementioned evaluation report. The cited recommendations are enclosed for your convenience.

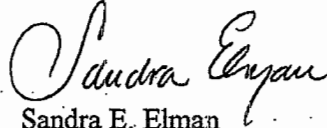
We will write in spring 2001 regarding the fall 2001 progress report.

The Commission concurs with the evaluation committee in commending the university for its high quality general education program that fulfills the vision articulated in the mission statement. Further, the Commission applauds the university's emphasis on the importance of artistic activities and the quality of those activities on the campus, including the high level of student work in the arts. The university's extensive artistic outreach efforts throughout the state of Montana and its artistic and cultural leadership in the state are indeed noteworthy. Moreover, the Commission finds laudable the faculty's and staff's keen interest in, and concern for, the academic success and general welfare of the students. The Commission is pleased to note the university's initiative in creating and supporting the unique degree-granting Native American Studies program which is charged with fostering relationships with various Native American communities. Lastly, the Commission commends the administrative support staff for their dedicated service and commitment to the students, faculty and the mission of the university.

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Again, congratulations. Best wishes for a good summer and a rewarding 2000-01 academic year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Elman".

Sandra E. Elman
Executive Director

SE:a

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Lois Muir, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Richard A. Crofts, Commissioner, Montana University System

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The five General Recommendations that follow represent shortcomings directly connected to Commission Standards and Policies as noted. UM-M needs to direct attention to them.

1. The University of Montana should initiate a conversation and partnership among the commissioner, Regents, and institutions to develop an opportunity with the legislature and executive branch to comprehensively evaluate and address the funding needs and mechanisms necessary to support the essential needs of higher education in service to the state of Montana, its students and citizens. Standards 1,7
2. The Committee found that the University has made a promising start in instituting plans for program assessment. However, the results to date vary significantly from one department to another. Some departments have long standing assessment plans which have been in use long enough to yield assessment data useful in bringing about process improvements on both the program and divisional levels. Other departments have yet to accumulate useful data or to use the assessment data in program improvement. The Committee recommends that the University continue and intensify its efforts in this area, so that the requirement for effective assessment plans can be met in all programs. Standard 2.B, Policy 2.2
3. Although the University has added to the library's collection budget for six consecutive years, it has not adequately increased its operational budget. As a result, the library's ability to maintain facilities, purchase needed equipment and provide the services required to meet the instructional and technology needs of students and faculty has suffered. Of particular note is the Instructional Media Services library, which is over crowded to the point where services to both students and faculty are dramatically diminished.

The committee recommends that the University address these deficiencies in the Mansfield Library's budget that are resulting in over crowding, limited hours and unacceptable backlogs in the Instructional Media Services library, as well as an increased inability of Mansfield library to provide adequate collections to support the teaching and research needs of University's students and faculty. Standards 5.A1; 5.A2; 5.C1; 5.D1.

4. The committee note that The University of Montana-Missoula has acknowledged in its goal statements and aspiration statement the importance of preparing educated citizens for meaningful and engaged lives in an increasingly diverse and interdependent world and the importance of promoting diversity and community among students, faculty and staff. In accordance with its stated goals and aspirations, the university is encouraged to take the necessary steps to enhance student understanding, knowledge and appreciation of multicultural perspectives and different cultures through its programmatic and other educational experiences that promote student growth toward these ends. In addition, the university is encouraged

to increase its efforts to attract students, faculty, and staff that represent a diversity of backgrounds and cultures. Standards 1 A.5; 2A.2

5. The University should update the comprehensive campus master plan and university-wide integrated master plans for all campuses. Specific areas that should be addressed include land use, infrastructure including technology, facility standards, transportation and parking, and guidelines for funding to provide adequate operations and maintenance for new facilities. Standards 8,1